

# APAAC ANNUAL VICTIM ADVOCATE CONFERENCE

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Phoenix, Arizona



## OVERVIEW OF WORKING WITH VICTIMS OF STRANGULATION

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Chair

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Distributed by:

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# OVERVIEW OF STRANGULATION

Angela Rose  
Arizona Coalition for Victim Services

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## Agenda

- Define Strangulation
  - ARS § 13-1204 (B)
- Lethality and Risk Assessment
- Signs and Symptoms
- Advocacy

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## STRANGULATION

Verb: a form of asphyxia (lack of oxygen) characterized by closure of the blood vessels and or air passages of the neck as a result of external pressure on the neck.

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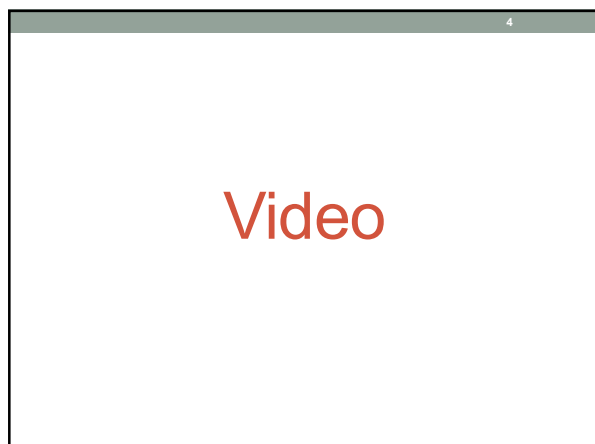
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 A presentation slide with a green header bar containing the number '5'. The title 'Strangulation is not...' is in red. Below it are two bullet points: 'Choking' and 'Suffocation', each with sub-points.
 

**Strangulation is not...**

- **Choking** is an internal process
  - However, keep in mind what words our victims use
- **Suffocation**
  - Suffocation is the obstruction of the mouth and nose to prevent breathing
  - Suffocation may not impact the circulation of blood through the brain like Strangulation does through external neck pressure

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 A presentation slide with a green header bar containing the number '6'. The title 'Lethality of Strangulation' is in red. Below it are three bullet points detailing the medical reality and legal status of strangulation.
 

**Lethality of Strangulation**

- Strangulation cases where the victim lives are often referred to as "non-fatal strangulation"
- Medical reality of Strangulation
  - Loss of consciousness can occur within 10-20 seconds
  - Permanent brain damage can occur within 3 minutes
  - Death can occur in 4-5 minutes
  - Progression of internal injuries left untreated can cause death up to several days after the assault
- "Cartoid Restraint" or "headlocks" are no longer permitted by most Law Enforcement agencies

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## Lethality, cont'd

- Injuries and medical risk depend on 3 factors:
  - Duration
  - Amount of applied force
  - Surface area of force
- Amount of applied force
  - It takes 22 pounds of pressure to open a soda can
  - It takes 11 pounds of pressure to render someone unconscious



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## Video

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## Overall Risk

- Victims of prior non-fatal strangulation are 7x more likely to become a victim of homicide (Glass, et al., 2008)
- Victims report that being strangled is the "ultimate act of power and control"

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## Signs and Symptoms

<p>• Signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Things you can see</li> <li>• 50% of victims have no visible injuries</li> <li>• 35% have injuries that are too minor to photograph</li> </ul>	<p>• Symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Things the victim is feeling</li> <li>• Not visible</li> <li>• Indicates possible internal injuries</li> </ul>
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## Signs and Symptoms

<p>Signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redness of neck</li> <li>• Scratch marks (why?)</li> <li>• Finger tip bruises</li> <li>• Tiny red spots (petechiae)</li> <li>• Blood red eyes (capillary rupture)</li> <li>• Swelling of neck, tongue, or lips</li> </ul>	<p>Symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice changes or loss of voice*</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing and swallowing*</li> <li>• Coughing or vomiting</li> <li>• Loss of consciousness</li> <li>• Involuntary urination/defecation</li> </ul>
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## Delayed Advocacy...a Different Perspective

- What if you receive the case months later?
- How does your advocacy differ from an immediate victim contact?
- What is your role as an Advocate in a Prosecutor's Office?

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## What Advocates Need to Know

- Significant impact of strangulation
  - Physical
  - Psychological
- Medical Follow-up
  - Explain the necessity of a medical exam (role of FNE)
- Resources
  - Brochure with Signs and Symptom's Log



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## QUESTIONS?

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## Thank you!

ACVS gratefully acknowledges Alliance for HOPE International for allowing us to reproduce, in part or in whole, the **Strangulation: A Quick Reference Guide, Facts Victims of Strangulation Need to Know, and the Signs and Symptoms Graphic**. The documents were accessed through the online Resource Library hosted by the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention.

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